

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### A RED SISTER.

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#### CHAPTER IX.

LADY JOAN'S rest was a short one that night, and her appetite for breakfast the following morning was taken away by a message from her father-in-law, which greeted her as she sat down to table, to the effect that he hoped the dog-cart had already been despatched to Summerhill to fetch Miss White.

The old gentleman had the—to Lady Joan's way of thinking—reprehensible habit, not only of expressing in decisive fashion any wishes that might occur to him over night, but of sending down the first thing the next morning to ascertain if those wishes had been carried out.

Annoyance was to follow annoyance that morning. The first post brought with it a very big annoyance indeed, in the shape of a letter from the Lady Honoria Herrick.

It was dated from Southmoor, and ran as follows:

"DEAREST AUNT,—You will be surprised to see we are all at home again. Father and mother returned last week from Belle-Plage, and I have been sent for from Brussels, because I'm told I'm finished, whatever that means. I have wonderful news to tell you—father says he hasn't the heart to write it, so I must—Southmoor is to be sold! Father says the place is going to utter ruin, and there is not the slightest likelihood of his ever being able to keep it up. So I have had to sign a lot of papers, and the thing will soon be an accomplished

fact. Between ourselves—I'm awfully glad. I hate the place; it's so mouldy and dilapidated, and there's such a horrible odour of ancestors hanging about it one feels as if one were living in a vault. I will write again soon and tell you all our plans so soon as we have any. At present, things are very unsettled. Mother is about as usual: that is to say, the weather doesn't suit her, and she is living on crumbs of chicken and egg-spoonfuls of jelly. Give my love to my uncle and cousin. Your loving niece,  
"HONOR."

Southmoor was to be sold! That was the only idea Lady Joan brought away from her niece's letter. Southmoor, the home of her childhood; the house where generations of Herricks had been born and had died was to come into the market to fall to the lot, perhaps, of some millionaire tradesman of democratic ideas and plebeian tastes; or, worse fate still, perhaps, be seized upon by some speculative building society, and the old park, with its stately trees, be parcelled into lots, upon which, in due course, red-brick middle-class villas would spring into existence.

Lady Joan had not visited the place much of late years. Her brother, the present Earl of Southmoor, married to an invalid, though high-born lady, and, haunted by the family spectre of poverty, had spent the past fifteen years of his life wandering about the Continent in search of health for his wife and cheap education for his only child. In tastes, he was Lady Joan's counterpart; in intellect, considerably her inferior. His pride had had to be largely deferred to in all Lady Joan's efforts to be of service to him. It went without saying that he and the Gaskells had nothing in common; and though Lady Joan would gladly have adopted her niece

and brought her up as her own daughter, the Earl preferred for the Lady Honoria an atmosphere of aristocratic poverty to the plebeian luxury of Longridge Castle.

If the young lady herself had been consulted on the matter, she would undoubtedly have made a different choice, for, the truth must be told, Lady Honoria was that anomaly in nature, a child as unlike its race as if it had been born in another planet. The one or two glimpses she had had of Longridge Castle in her childhood, even now contrasted pleasantly in her mind with the life she had since been compelled to lead in cheap continental hotels, or in later years in a cheap school at Brussels.

Lady Joan in making plans for Herrick's future, had freely admitted the fact that her niece was not everything that an aristocratic damsel should be. She comforted herself, however, with the thought of Honoria's youth, and the possibility that her faults of character, though glaring, were purely superficial. Married to Herrick, settled down at Southmoor, under her own immediate eye, what might not be hoped for in the way of reformation for so young a girl!

She did not care to dwell upon the girl's undisguised satisfaction at the thought of the sale of the old home. The bitter fact alone riveted her attention.

"It shall not be," she exclaimed aloud, as she folded the letter, and laid it on one side. "If I have to go down on my knees to my husband to make him buy the place, it shall not come into the market!"

A second thought followed—that of the feeble old grandfather, who, once before when the purchase of Southmoor had been hinted at by Lady Joan, had exclaimed: "Don't touch it, John, it would be a non-paying investment."

Surely never did messenger bring more ill-timed tidings than the servant who at this moment entered and announced that Miss White had arrived.

Lois White, in her schoolroom at Summerhill, surrounded by her small pupils, had been not a little surprised at the message brought to her that morning "with Lady Joan's compliments."

"Wants to see me?" she repeated, blankly, as she fetched her hat and gloves, and despatched a message to Mrs. Leyton, asking for permission to be free of the schoolroom that morning.

Her heart beat fast as she thought of a second ordeal, even more terrible than the

one which, two days back, she had gone through under the ægis of Herrick's presence. Now, neither Herrick nor his father would, she knew, be at Longridge to receive her, and alone she would have to face Herrick's mother in her rigid staidness. Her fears increased upon her as she sat waiting for Lady Joan in one of the big drawing-rooms.

"Oh, if Herrick had but been born to poverty instead of to wealth such as this!" was her thought, as her eye took stock of the beauty and luxuriousness of her surroundings.

Another thought trod on the heels of this one:

"What silly presumption for me to think for a moment that Herrick's mother, with her aristocratic blood, in addition to her wealth, would ever receive poor, little me as a fit wife for her son."

Lady Joan's manner when, after about a quarter of an hour, she entered the room, was not reassuring:

"I hope my sending for you in school-hours has not inconvenienced you," she said, after a formal bow, and a touch with the tips of her fingers. "Mr. Gaskell, however, was anxious to see you, and one feels compelled to defer to the wishes of one at his great age."

Lois murmured a string of polite commonplaces in reply, and Lady Joan resumed:

"I am glad on my own account, as well as on Mr. Gaskell's, that you were able to come, for there is something I particularly wish to say to you—something, in fact, that must be said; could not be written."

The methodical manner in which she spoke showed that she had not kept Lois waiting fifteen minutes for nothing.

Lois flushed crimson. She felt that the thunder-cloud she had dreaded was about to break now.

Lady Joan went on:

"But before I speak what necessity has laid upon me to speak, may I ask one question—a very important one—do you really consider yourself to be engaged to be married to my son?"

The words were spoken now. Lois started; her lips opened; but never a word escaped them. Did she consider herself to be engaged to be married? No, not in the sense in which most young girls consider themselves to be engaged to be married after the momentous question has been asked and answered. That Herrick looked upon marriage as the inevitable ending to

his courtship there was not a doubt. Lois, however, before the day on which Herrick had slipped a diamond and ruby ring on her finger had come to an end, had said to herself: "There is such a thing as loving and letting go. If I thought my love for Herrick might be detrimental to him in the days to come, I would take myself out of his life at once and for ever."

Lady Joan, waiting for her answer and looking down into that frank, childlike face, read it as easily as she would read an open book.

Lois had put on a small round hat that morning, and neither drooping brim nor veil hid the pained, bewildered look which said, as plainly as words could: "I am brought face to face with a matter beyond my capabilities. Where shall I look for help and guidance?"

Lady Joan—with a slight feeling of wonder over the girl's simplicity—said to herself that her course lay plain before her now. An appeal to the girl, founded on her love for Herrick, a few words of advice, some golden guineas, and the thing was done.

"A pretty enough child," she thought; "the very wife for a struggling artist—she would save him a small fortune in models. But a wife for Herrick! No!"

Aloud she said:

"I am sorry if my question has given you pain. Pardon my abruptness in asking it. Let me put it in another form. Do you love my son?"

Lois knew well enough how to answer that question.

"Love him!" she cried passionately, clasping her hands together, "oh, I would lay down my life, gladly, at any time, to save him a moment's pain."

"Then, of course," said Lady Joan, coldly, and with great decision, "you have given careful thought to the question whether his marriage with you would be likely to conduce to his real happiness in life?"

"Careful thought!" cried Lois, impetuously. "I have thought of nothing else from morning till night since the day he—he asked me—to be his wife; but how can I—how is it possible for me to decide what will or will not make his happiness?"

"No self-seeking there, no ambitious views for herself, so I may as well speak out plainly," thought Lady Joan. So she said, with great deliberation:

"And I, too, as Herrick's mother, have

thought of nothing else from morning till night since I knew that marriage was in his thoughts; but I have had no difficulty in forming a decisive opinion on the matter. Shall I tell you what it is?"

Lois turned her face eagerly towards her.

"It is this," said Lady Joan, coldly, bluntly, cruelly. "That a marriage between you and him would be about the most disastrous thing that could happen to him; for the twofold reason that it would sow dissension between him and his relatives, and prevent his making a marriage suitable to his station in life."

A sharp cry, such as a child cut with a knife might utter, broke from Lois's lips. She grew pale; her hands clasped together convulsively.

"Help me, help me!" she cried, piteously. "What am I to do?"

"If you are asking the question, really wishing for an answer, I will tell you," said Lady Joan, calmly and coldly as before. "Go away at once. Leave Longridge at once and for ever. Don't go into hysterics over it and talk about a breaking heart and such like—ah, pardon me—nonsense; but write, after you have left here, a plain, common-sense letter to my son, telling him that, having well thought over the matter, you have come to the conclusion that unequal marriages are good for neither party concerned, and that consequently of yourself, of your own free will—kindly lay stress on that—you have taken steps to end the engagement."

"Go! where shall I go!" said Lois, plaintively. "I haven't a friend in the world except Mrs. Leyton."

Lady Joan looked at her incredulously.

"Not a friend!" she repeated. "Where were you living before you came to Summerhill?"

"I was brought up at a big orphanage. My father was a naval officer, he and my mother both died when I was a child. I went straight from the orphanage to Summerhill when I was old enough to teach."

"And had you no relatives save father and mother?" asked Lady Joan. "Pardon my questions; but I am trying to see my way to helping you in the future, in any manner you may like to choose."

"My father had a cousin I used to see at one time; but he went to America long ago. I have not heard from him for years."

"I dare say you could find out his present

address in some way. It seems to me that America would be a very desirable destination for you, all things considered. It would involve complete change of scene and surroundings—a very great consideration—and——”

But Lady Joan's sentence was not to be finished; for at this moment Dr. Scott's voice, in loud tones, was heard immediately outside the door.

“Never mind about announcing me,” he was saying, no doubt to a servant. “I must see her without a moment's delay.”

Then he pushed open the door and entered without ceremony.

“Lady Joan,” he said, abruptly, “I have just received a telegram from your son containing sad news. There is no time to tell you as you ought to be told, for the telegram has unfortunately been delayed in transmission, and the news will announce itself unless I make haste. So far as I understand the message, there has been a second terrible explosion at the Wrexford mines, and your husband—there, I see you understand me—no, not killed; severely injured. They are bringing him now. The ambulance is almost at the door. More than this I do not know.”

#### CHAPTER X.

HERRICK'S account of the terrible occurrence, given in short, disjointed sentences, was easy enough to understand. His father had not been indulging in any deeds of Quixotic heroism, but had simply been doing his duty at the pit's mouth, and in the mines, as he had ever done in similar circumstances, organising search-parties, and seeing that the men already rescued were properly attended to. A second explosion had not been anticipated, and he, and his father also, had several times descended the shaft in the miner's cage. Help had been greatly needed in all quarters, and he himself had helped to bear away the last ambulance of rescued men in default of sufficient bearers.

Meantime, his father, in company with the chief engineer, had descended the shaft in order to ascertain if a certain improved system of ventilation which had been submitted to him were practicable. When the cage was within twenty feet of the bottom, the second explosion had occurred; his father and the engineer had both been violently precipitated from the cage, the engineer had been killed on the

spot, and his father had sustained—so far as could be ascertained—terrible bruises to his limbs, and serious injuries to the spine.

“Terrible bruises to his limbs, and serious injuries to the spine!” The verdict of the doctors, after a more prolonged examination had been made, was simply the translation into technical language of Herrick's words.

They expressed their gravest fears as to his chances of ultimate recovery.

Old Dr. Scott went a step farther than the Wrexford doctors who had accompanied the ambulance home, and confided as his opinion to the nurse whose services had been hastily called into requisition, that “twenty-four hours must see the end of it.”

In order to avoid additional jolting, John Gaskell had been carried on the mattress on which he had lain in the ambulance, into a room on the ground-floor—one of old Mr. Gaskell's luxuriously-furnished suite of apartments. Here they had hastily placed a bedstead, and here, within two rooms from where his aged father was lying, it was fated that John Gaskell's last hours should be spent.

Lady Joan had borne the shock of the ill-tidings better than Herrick could have anticipated. At first, possibly, she had scarcely realised the full import of Dr. Scott's words; but when, about five minutes after, the slow ambulance-bearers had brought in the once-stalwart John, one single glance at his white, drawn face, must have told her the whole terrible truth.

“Come in here, mother,” Herrick said, drawing her back into her boudoir, which opened off the hall. “There are several doctors—you will be in the way just now. I shall remain beside my father.”

Then he looked up and saw Lois standing, looking pale and scared, at the farther end of the room. He did not at the moment realise the strangeness of the fact of her presence in the house—only hailed it with delight. In the terrible sorrow which had come upon them, who so likely to be helpful and sympathetic as the sweet girl so soon to be one of the family?

“You will look after my mother, Lois,” was all he said, as he hastily withdrew.

Lois's heart sank; her instincts warned her that she would be the last person in the world to whom Herrick's mother would turn for consolation.

She made one step from out her corner.



"Shall I go—shall I stay—can I be of any use?" she asked, timidly.

Even with the shadow of a great sorrow falling upon her, Lady Joan's brain was quite clear to decide whether the girl whom she had judged to be no fit wife for Herrick was to be admitted to that position of friendliness in the house which alone justifies the acceptance of services in a time of need.

"You could not by any possibility be of any—the slightest—use in the circumstances," she answered, coldly. "I would suggest that you return at once to Summerhill and think well over the conversation we have had this morning. When you have thoroughly considered the matter, I feel sure——"

But at this moment the door opened, and Herrick entered the room as hastily as he had quitted it.

"Mother," he said, "my father has for a moment recovered consciousness, and has spoken your name. I think he wishes you to sit beside him."

#### CHAPTER XI.

"My father has spoken your name!" To John Gaskell, with the first faint gleam of consciousness, came the thought of his wife. Nearly thirty years of wedded life forges something of a bond between a man and woman. The mere fact that two people have thus long walked side by side through life is in itself a guarantee that a bond of companionship has been formed. More than this there may be, but this at least there must be. At times, one of the two may have wished to turn to the left when the other would fain go to the right, and each may occasionally have given a sigh for more congenial companionship. In spite of this, however, the sense of comradeship remains unbroken, and when at last death, with sharp touch, smites the hands of the two asunder, the loss is measured by what might have been rather than by what actually has been.

Thus, at least, it was with John Gaskell now as he lay upon his death-bed.

He had not been married a month before his shrewd common-sense had laid bare to him the fact that Lady Joan had married him for his wealth, not for himself. Characteristically, he had surveyed the "situation," and had done his best to save his life, as well as his wife's, from shipwreck.

"There never can be any talk of love between us," he had said to himself, "but

we can at least remember that we are an educated lady and gentleman bound to live together for life, and treat each other with proper respect and consideration."

Lady Joan he was inclined to pity rather than to blame. He laid the blame of their ill-advised marriage entirely on the shoulders of the courtly and impetuous old Earl, her grandfather.

Of Vaughan Elliot he knew nothing, or, possibly, his estimate of Lady Joan's conduct might have suffered some modification. His acquaintance with the Southmoor family was but slight: a tramp on the Devon moors after snipe in company with Joan's brother, a subsequent introduction to the fascinating sister, a stay of three days at Southmoor, and the thing was done.

John Gaskell was very young at the time. His gold had not opened all doors to him; and the flattering attentions showered upon him by the ancient aristocrat, for the moment dazzled and blinded him. Later on, when disillusion came, he was not the one to sound the town-crier's bell and cry: "Oyez, oyez, oyez. I've been tricked into a marriage for the sake of my gold. Come and pity me every one who passes by."

The utmost that outsiders could note was, that after his marriage, John became devoted to his business in a manner not to be expected of so wealthy a man. Also, that Lady Joan's opinions or advice were never on any occasion sought for by him, though he would spend hours closeted with his old father, discussing all matters, great or small, that concerned the welfare of his household or that of his workpeople. All, however, who knew John Gaskell intimately, were forced to admit that he treated his wife from year's end to year's end with the most unvarying politeness, lavished his gold upon her, saw that every one of her whims and wishes was gratified so soon as formed, although possibly he did not seem to trouble himself much as to what went on in her heart.

And Lady Joan, on her part, had seemed to acquiesce in a condition of things she was powerless to alter. To tell the truth, it very well suited her cold and unsympathetic temperament that no exhibitions of ardent feeling should be required of her. To do her justice, she was incapable of the small hypocrisies by which so many women make their household wheels to work smoothly. No flimsy self-deception hid from her eyes the fact that she was as

much a stranger and an alien in her own home as if she had been born in another clime, and had been taught to speak a tongue different from that which her husband, her son, and her father-in-law spoke.

Even now as she entered the darkened room and took her seat at the head of the bed, whereon her husband lay stricken to his death, there were no tears on her face, and not for a moment did she say in her heart, as so many wives in similar circumstances would have said:

"Life ends for me to-day, though I may breathe and eat and drink for another fifty years to come."

Her husband made no sign, by so much as a quiver of the eyelid, that he was conscious of her presence. After one brief gleam of consciousness he had relapsed into insensibility; his heavy stertorous breathing proclaiming the fact.

"It is partly the effect of the opiate we have been compelled to administer," said the old doctor, coming forward. "You need not remain, unless you choose, Lady Joan. Your husband will not be conscious of your presence."

Lady Joan, however, chose to remain. She leaned back in her chair with her hand pressed over her eyes, her face by only one degree less white and rigid than that of the suffering man beside whom she sat.

"Poor soul!" thought the doctor, pityingly, "she is thinking of what lies before her in the future."

Yes, that was exactly what Lady Joan was doing, although not quite in the fashion which the doctor imagined. She was thinking what a miserable position hers would be, by-and-by, when John was gone and she was utterly dependent either upon the old man or upon Herrick.

She knew exactly the financial position of the Gaskells, one towards each other, for John had never been reticent on the matter. "I am my father's administrator, head-steward, general manager, what you will," he had been wont to say, when his friends had made complimentary allusions to his wealth or position, as the largest landowner in the county. It was true that yearly, as a matter of convenience, a large sum of money was placed to John's banking account, so that cheques might be drawn and payments made by him; but this in no wise affected the fact that Longridge and the mines at Wrexford, and all other land and investments—great and

small—belonged in their entirety to old Mr. Gaskell, and only at his death could become John's.

Now, if the old man had died, as he might reasonably have been expected to do, some twenty years back, Lady Joan's thoughts ran, all this wealth and property would have been John's. He, no doubt, would have made liberal provision for her by will, and—

Ah! here a sudden recollection flashing across her mind put all other thoughts to flight. John had once, long ago, made a will; so long ago, indeed, that until that moment she had forgotten all about it. Some twenty years back, John had been called upon to undertake a tour of inspection among certain South American mines, in which he possessed an interest. The will which he then made, on the eve of his departure, had been framed to meet two contingencies—old Mr. Gaskell's death during John's absence, and the subsequent death of John through misadventure. Both these events were within the range of the possibilities; for the old gentleman had passed his threescore and ten years, and John was about to run the gauntlet of all sorts of dangers amid mines and machinery.

The will, though elaborated by the lawyers into folios and sheets, was, in itself, a very simple document, and merely gave all the property—"real, landed, or personal"—of which John might die possessed to Lady Joan for life, with reversion to Herrick on her death. Old friends of John Gaskell's were appointed trustees to this will, and, until Lady Joan's death, Herrick could only draw a certain fixed income from the estate. At this time Lady Joan's health was very fragile, and there seemed to be little likelihood of her living to see Herrick grown to manhood.

"Read it, Joan, and let me see that you understand it," her husband had said to her, with a look, half-pitying, half-contemptuous, in his eyes, which she had found even more easy to read than the sheets of parchment which he handed to her.

"Here, you poor woman, who have sold yourself for wealth and luxury," that look seemed to say, "I have taken care that Fate shall not cheat you out of your dues."

"Remember, Joan," he had said, as he folded the will and placed it in an envelope addressed to his solicitors, "this is only so much waste paper, unless my father dies before me."

No other will, to Lady Joan's certain knowledge, had since been made by him; for, until the death of his father, no necessity for so doing could arise. No doubt, if the thought of this will had ever come into John's mind, it must simply have figured to him, as he had before phrased it, as "so much waste paper."

"So much waste paper," thought Lady Joan, bitterly, the echo of her husband's words, spoken twenty years back, ringing sharply in her ears now. "My thirty years of bondage served to no purpose! Southmoor to be sold, and the will which would enable me to buy Southmoor twice over with ease, so much waste paper! And all because an old man's useless life has been unnaturally prolonged! If the two must die, it is a thousand pities that the old man should not go first!"

### GIANTOLOGY.

A MEMBER of the Académie Française, M. Henrion, propounded, in 1718, a curious theory, according to which the human race has gradually decreased in stature. Our progenitor, Adam, says the learned academician, was one hundred and twenty-three feet nine inches in height; Eve was one hundred and eighteen feet nine inches; Noah was twenty-seven feet; Abraham, twenty feet; and Moses, thirteen feet in height.

Whence M. Henrion derived his information we cannot so much as guess; but we are glad to know, on his assurance, that a process, apparently designed to whittle away the human race to vanishing point, suddenly and permanently ceased at the beginning of the Christian era. That there were races of giants in the earlier ages of the world has been a common belief; which may be found stated in such widely divergent books as Pliny's *Natural History*, and St. Augustine's *"De Civitate Dei."*

Most nations of the world have traditions of their ancestors, handed down from prehistoric times, and we invariably find that there were giants in those days. The hearers of Homer's *"Odyssey"* had no manner of doubt that, somewhere beyond the sea, there dwelt monsters similar to that Polyphemus whose single eye Ulysses destroyed with a firebrand. And that this is a mere tradition of pre-Hellenic barbarism, magnified through the mist of time, is a comparatively modern discovery.

In 1536 the voracious Sir John Maun-

deville had some account to give of what looks very like the Cyclops; for he says: "In one of these yles ben folk of gret stature, as geauntes, and they ben hidouse for to loke upon, and thei han but on eye, and that is in the myddle of the front."

But, apart from the existence of monsters, such as the poetry and folk-lore of every nation abounds in, there appears to have been a general impression that the men of old were taller men than now. The Hindoos have a tradition of a giant race who bestrode elephants as we do horses. The Grecian heroes, at the siege of Troy, were said to have thrown stones at their enemies which the strongest of their descendants could not move. Homer and Vergil speak of the men of their own day as mere dwarfs in comparison with those elder heroes of whom they sang. So strongly did this idea take possession of the Greek mind, that their actors, when personating the traditionary heroes on the stage, made themselves taller with buskins, lengthened their arms with gauntlets, and padded themselves out to appear of proportionate breadth and strength.

Many readers of the *"Idylls of the King"* will be astonished to hear that, according to one account of him, the blameless Arthur was "fifteen foote long in the prime of his yers;" that Queen Guinivere was twelve feet high; and Sir Gawaine, twelve feet and a half.

When Queen Elizabeth visited Kenilworth Castle, in 1575, there were six gigantic figures, eight feet in height, standing over the castle gate. And a contemporary writer says: "By this dumb show it was meant that in the daies of King Arthur men were of that stature. So that the Castle of Kenilworth should seem still to be kept by King Arthur's heirs and their servants."

We may pass by the Anakim and other giant races spoken of in the Bible, for the reason that, from the Septuagint downwards, there appears to have been some ambiguity about the use of the word giant in Scripture. Rabbinical glosses and interpretations may be found in plenty; but they only make matters worse. We are told, for instance, that Og, King of Bashan, escaped the Flood, by wading, only knee deep, beside the Ark; that he lived three thousand years; that one of his bones long served for a bridge over a river; and that once, being hungry, he roasted a freshly-caught fish at the sun!

What kind of fish this was, or how

it was caught, the rabbins do not say; but doubtless

His angle-rod made of a sturdy oak,  
His line a cable that in storms ne'er broke,  
His hook he baited with a dragon's tail,  
And sat upon a rock and bobbed for whale.

Emerson says it is natural to believe in great men; and we fancy his remark may be true in more senses than one. Rabelais' Gargantua, who required seventeen thousand nine hundred and thirteen cows to supply him with milk; who ate six pilgrims in a salad without knowing anything about it; and who combed his hair with a comb nine hundred feet long, the teeth of which were the tusks of great elephants, may be suspected to be an exaggeration. Even Gulliver's Brobdingnagians, who were only "about as tall as an ordinary spire-steeple," are thought to have had an odd cubit or two added to their stature; but the story of any moderate-sized giant seems at any time to have been accepted, without the least demand for anything in the shape of adequate evidence or proof. "Whoever will," says Sir John Maundeville, after relating some marvel, "may believe me if he will, and whoever will not, may choose." But when we remember that even a naturalist like Buffon had no doubt of the existence of giants, ten, twelve, or fifteen feet in height, we may perhaps cease to wonder that unscientific people in an unscientific age found it no tax on their credulity to swallow a good deal more.

Mr. Tylor, in his "Early History of Mankind," tells us that the earliest discoveries of large fossil bones, such as those of the mammoth and mastodon, were always spoken of as discoveries of gigantic human bones. When a tooth, weighing four pounds and three-quarters, and a thigh-bone seventeen feet long, were found in New England, Dr. Increase Mather addressed a paper to the Royal Society of London on the subject, and quoted them as conclusive proof of the immense stature of antediluvian man. There are many stories of the discovery of gigantic human remains during the Middle Ages. In 1613, some masons, digging near the ruins of a castle in Dauphiné, in a field traditionally called the "giant's field," discovered a tomb, and therein a skeleton, said to be a human skeleton, entire. It measured twenty-five feet six inches in length, ten feet across the shoulders, and five feet from breast to back. This account is very circumstantial, but we are sorry to say it

is entitled to no more credit on that score.

Quetelet has shown the principle on which variations in the size of sundry individuals of a race may be accounted for. It may perhaps be sufficient to state here that the existence of a giant twenty feet high can be shown to involve the existence of a race whose average height is between thirteen and fourteen feet. When we are asked to believe in the existence of the former, we may fairly ask for some proof of the existence of the latter. Quetelet avers that the tallest man whose stature has been authentically recorded was a Scotchman, who measured eight feet three inches, and was secured for his regiment of gigantic guards by the indefatigable Frederick the Great.

In any account, ancient or modern, of the wonders of nature or art, the enquirer may expect to find exaggeration and inaccuracy rampant. This is well exemplified in the various accounts given at different times of the stature of the Patagonians, the tallest known race in the world. It is now known that they attain to an average stature of about five feet eleven inches. At the close of the sixteenth century they were described in Pigafetta's "Voyage Round the World" as so tall, that the Spaniards' heads scarcely reached up to the Patagonians' waists. Assuming these Spaniards to have been no taller than five feet six inches, this account would credit the Patagonians with a stature of nine feet. Sir T. Cavendish calls them gigantic, and says the foot of one of them measured eighteen inches in length. According to the known laws of human proportion, this would give them a height of seven and a half feet. The naturalist, Turner, asserts that one of them measured twelve feet in height. Andreas Thevet, in a "Description of America," published in 1575, says he measured the skeleton of one, and found it to be eleven feet five inches in length. Van Noort, a Dutch traveller, about 1598 captured and brought away a native boy, who described some of his countrymen as ten or twelve feet high. Sebald de Weert, who visited Patagonia in 1598, describes the people as being ten or eleven feet high, and so strong that they could easily tear up by the roots trees of a span in diameter. Sir Richard Hawkins simply says they were a head taller than Europeans.

P. J. Tarrubia, who published his "Gianthologia," in 1761, to prove the



existence of giants in Patagonia, says that he has conversed with many sailors and travellers who had seen men there nine or ten feet in height; and asserts that the South Americans had a body of soldiers, consisting of about four hundred men, whose statures ranged from nine to eleven feet.

Byron, in 1764, says that he saw a chief not less than seven feet high, and others nearly as tall.

The "Annual Register," for 1768, says: "some of them are certainly nine feet, if they do not exceed it; . . . there was hardly a man less than eight feet; . . . the women . . . run from seven and a half feet to eight."

Captain Wallis, in 1766, measured some Patagonians, who were six feet seven inches; but the general stature he found to be from five feet ten to six feet.

In 1785 some Spanish officers measured certain Patagonians, "with great accuracy," and found the common height to range from six feet six to seven feet.

Captain Bourne, about 1849, says he thinks their average height must be six and a half feet; but he had nothing to measure them with.

These varying accounts of the size of a people, still in existence to be measured, are sufficient to show that all accounts of abnormalities—whether by Plutarch or Pliny, by Saxo Grammaticus or St. Augustine, to say nothing of Barnum—need to be taken with great reserve.

Pliny relates that, in the time of Claudius Caesar, a man named Gabbaras was brought by that Emperor from Arabia to Rome, and that his height was nine feet nine inches: "The tallest man that has been seen in our times."

The Emperor Maximinus was said to be eight feet and a half or nine feet in height. He could draw a carriage which two oxen could not move, and usually ate about forty pounds of meat and drank six gallons of wine every day! The Emperor Jovianus is spoken of as a giant, though of somewhat more modest proportions and achievements than these. The Emperor Charlemagne, according to received tradition, was of gigantic stature; but was quite overtopped by a soldier of his army, whose fame has not equalled his deserts, for he is reported to have overthrown whole battalions of the enemy as if he were mowing grass, and ought certainly to be accorded a place beside Samson in the popular pantheon of heroic warriors.

Harold Hardrake, King of Norway, is reported to have been more than eight feet high; and Rolf the Ganger, a Danish Chief of the ninth century, was too tall and heavy for any horse to carry, and so gained his surname by always travelling on foot.

Guy, Earl of Warwick, was doubtless a very big fellow; but no one at the present time will undertake to separate the true from the fabulous in his history. What is shown as his porridge-pot, at Warwick Castle, is, in reality, an old garrison cauldron, and the armour, said to have been worn by him, was evidently made for a horse. What that six-foot-long weapon of iron was originally used for we cannot undertake to say; but it certainly appears to us slightly improbable that Guy used it as a table fork!

Perhaps the tallest story of this kind is one told by John Cassanio, in his "De Gigantibus," published in 1580, to the effect that one of Francis the First's Guards, an archer, was of such a height, that a man of ordinary size might walk upright between his legs when he stood astride.

Fuller, in his "Worthies," mentions Walter Parsons, a native of Staffordshire, who was first a blacksmith and afterwards porter to James the First and Charles the First. His height, according to some accounts, was seven feet two inches, and, according to others, as much as seven feet seven, and his strength was immense. His successor in the office of Royal porter was William Evans, who was two inches taller, but much weaker, and, like many giants, knock-kneed. Evans was the man who, while dancing in a Court masque, as well as his weak legs permitted, drew out of one of his pockets the fiery little dwarf, Jeffrey Hudson.

Oliver Cromwell had a porter, named Daniel, who was seven feet six inches high. Unfortunately, he took to reading books of divinity, fancied himself a second prophet Daniel, and went mad. Many people believed in him, and he used to preach to large congregations. He was found to be incurable, and was confined in Bedlam. The story is told that a gentleman once ventured to ask a female member of his congregation what good the ravings of such a madman could do her, and received the reply, delivered with withering scorn, that Festus thought the Apostle Paul to be a raving madman.

The modern lesser giants, like the ancient mightier traditional ones, are to be

found in all races and countries; and Londoners have had various opportunities of seeing, for a consideration, specimens described as English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, Dutch, Polish, Negro, Indian, and Chinese.

The garrulous Pepys records in his Diary that in 1664 he saw a Dutch giant at Charing Cross, stated to measure nine feet six inches in height. In 1728, a German giant, named Miller, was exhibited in London, after having previously shown himself to most of the Sovereigns of Europe. Louis the Fourteenth of France had given him a richly-mounted sword and a silver sceptre, and he was in the habit of swaggering up and down with these articles in his hands whenever people came to see him. He attracted much notice in London, and report credits him with being seven feet eight inches in height, with a hand twelve inches in length, and one finger which measured nine inches.

Edmund Malone, an Irish giant, was brought to England when he was nineteen years of age. He was shown to Charles the Second, and the merry Monarch walked under his arm. In the handbills he was described as being ten feet and a half high, but he seems to have really measured seven feet six inches.

In Trinity College, Dublin, is still preserved the skeleton of Cornelius McGrath, who, after his death, at the age of twenty-four, was found to measure seven feet eight inches in height. When fifteen years of age, he was attacked by violent pains, which were at first supposed to be rheumatic, but which were afterwards surmised to be growing pains, for, during one year he grew from the height of five feet to that of six feet eight inches and three-quarters. A boy, sixteen years of age, of that extraordinary size, naturally attracted a great deal of attention, and a crowd of men, women, and children always followed him whenever he showed himself in the streets of Cork. His hand is described as about the size of an ordinary shoulder of mutton; the lasts on which his shoes were made measured fifteen inches in length; but for all his bulk, he was very moderate in eating and drinking.

O'Brien, the first Irish giant of that name, was eight feet four inches in length at the time of his death. Having made some money by exhibiting himself, he exchanged the bulk of it for two bank-notes, one of seven hundred pounds, the other of

seventy pounds. These were stolen from his pocket, and the loss afflicted him so keenly that he took to drink in a manner that hastened his end. He expressed a wish that his body might be thrown into the sea, so that the doctors might not have his bones; but this was denied him, and his skeleton is now in the Hunterian Museum. A second Irish giant of the same name exhibited himself in London, and became somewhat famous. He claimed to be eight feet three inches and a half in height; but his barber, who wrote a glowing account of him in the "Mirror" for 1826, alleged that he was four and a quarter inches taller. He used to sleep on two beds joined together, as any ordinary couch would have been useless to him. He was courageous, possessed the warm temperament of an Irishman, and was endowed with more than average intelligence for a bricklayer, so the superior barber informs us:

"Mr. O'Brien enjoyed his early pipe, and the lamps of the town (Northampton) afforded him an easy method of lighting it. When at the door of Mr. Dent, in Bridge Street, he withdrew the cap to the lamp, whiffed his tobacco into flame, and stalked away as if no uncommon event had taken place."

On one occasion he is said to have kissed a young lady who was leaning out of the upper window of a house to look at him as he walked along the street. And, at another time, travelling in the carriage specially made to accommodate his unusual proportions, he was stopped by a highwayman. The giant thrust out his head, and as much of his body as possible, to see what was the matter, whereupon the highwayman was so panic-stricken that he clapped spurs to his horse and fled.

The celebrity of these two Irishmen appears to have produced quite a crop of Irish giants, who all dubbed themselves by the name of O'Brien. A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" says he once saw one made:

"A tall, lathy, overgrown, beardless lad was called into a booth, on Ham Common, and, in ten minutes after, consenting to hire himself to the showman for the day, he was transformed into a whiskered giant at least a foot taller and twenty stone heavier than before; so that actually his very mother and sisters, who paid to see the 'Irish Giant,' did not recognise him."

Giants usually make their appearance, quite unexpectedly, among brothers and sisters and other relatives of ordinary size;

but occasionally we hear of an entire family of them.

James Toller, called the young English giant, was eight feet one inch in height at the age of eighteen, and could boast of two sisters who were similar monstrosities: one, at the age of thirteen, was five feet eight inches, and the other, at the age of seven, was nearly five feet high.

A farmer of Norfolk, standing six feet six inches in height, married a wife who was little short of six feet, and weighed fourteen stone. They had a family, consisting of five daughters and four sons, all of whom were of great size: the height of the males averaging six feet five, and that of the females, six feet three and a half inches. One of the sons, Robert—who was introduced to the Royal Family, in 1851—was seven feet six inches in height, and thirty-three stone in weight. He died of consumption, at about the age of forty-three.

The Frenchman, Louis Frenz—who was exhibited in London, in 1822—was seven feet four, or six, inches in height, and is said to have had two sisters nearly as tall, and a brother, taller than himself.

Chang Woo Gow, the Chinese giant, who measured seven feet nine inches, had a sister who is reported to have reached the enormous height of eight feet four inches.

Frederick the Great, of Prussia, formed a regiment of the tallest men he could procure, and insisted on their marrying the tallest women they could find, with a view of producing a giant race of guards; but in this he was unsuccessful. Voltaire says that these men were his greatest delight. Those who stood in the front rank were none of them less than seven feet high; and he ransacked Europe and Asia to add to their number. There is a somewhat apocryphal story that Frederick was once reviewing his regiment of giants in the presence of the French, Spanish, and English Ambassadors, and that he asked each of these in turn whether an equal number of their countrymen would care to engage with such soldiers. The French and Spanish ambassadors politely replied in the negative; but the English ambassador replied that, while he could not venture to assert that an equal number of his countrymen would beat the giants, he was perfectly sure that half the number would try.

Giants are generally dull, heavy-minded, as well as heavy-bodied, and although sometimes possessed of enormous strength,

are often sickly, knock-kneed, and not unfrequently idiotic, forming a striking contrast to their opposites, the dwarfs, who are generally quick and intelligent. As Shakespeare says:

'Tis excellent  
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant;

and we may congratulate ourselves that they generally do not know how to use it. During the seventeenth century the Empress of Austria gathered together at Vienna all the giants and dwarfs to be found in the German Empire. They were all housed in one building, and there were some apprehensions that the dwarfs would be terrified at the sight of the giants. Instead of this, however, the dwarfs teased, insulted, and even robbed the giants, just as the redoubtable Jack and Hop-o'-my-Thumb do in the children's story-books, until the monsters were forced to pray for protection from their lively little enemies. Virey lays it down as a general principle that the bigger a man's body, the smaller is his mind, though he will, of course, allow of a few exceptions. "Tall men," he says, "are mostly tame and insipid, like watery vegetables; insomuch that we seldom hear of a very tall man becoming a very great man." They do not even make the best soldiers; and it may not be insignificant that the conquerors of the world, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon, were all little men, while Attila, who overthrew Rome, was a mere dwarf. Wanley, in his "Wonders of the Little World," quaintly says: "As the tallest ears of corn are the lightest in the head, and the houses many stories high have their uppermost rooms the worst furnished, so those human fabrics which nature hath raised to a giant-like height are observed not to have so happy a composition of the brain as other men." On the whole, in stature, as in other things, perfection appears to lie in the golden mean.

### THE FIRST ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

[In order that our readers may be "posted" on both sides of the case, we publish the following notes from a correspondent on the article "Early Telegraphy," which appeared in No. 60, Third Series, of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, February 22nd, 1890.]

ALL THE YEAR ROUND, I know, would not willingly convey wrong impressions, still less mislead the opinions of its readers

with respect to facts, which, although reputed to be stubborn things, have at times a singular habit of becoming very vapoury and unstable in the sight of men—not to mention women.

A contributor, who lately discoursed upon the subject of "Early Telegraphy" in these pages, has unfortunately gone a little astray in the matter of the primary application of electricity to telegraphic purposes, by placing the first attempt in that direction at too down-river a point upon the stream of time. It is an excusable error enough; but an error it remains, and it happens that, latterly, I have had certain exceptional means of knowing that the statement: "It was not until 1833 that the first attempt to set up an electric telegraph was made by Weber"—meaning his line from Berlin to Trèves—is wide of the bull's-eye of truth, and is, in point of fact, a complete "outer."

Clear and precise as science is generally supposed to be, there are, nevertheless, many hazy notions floating in the popular mind as to who invented this or that, and how or when; and the practical invention of the electric telegraph is a case in point, about which that peculiar public organism still requires a considerable amount of enlightenment. From the "overwhelming majority" of even those who are accounted "well informed," the answer to the question: "Who invented the Electric Telegraph?" would most assuredly be the ready and erroneous one: "Oh, Cooke and Wheatstone, of course;" but any reader who cares to follow out what promises to be a dryish subject to the end, may become better informed, and assured of the fallacy of such popular ideas upon the subject.

No doubt the idea of an electric appliance for telegraphing signals had been active in many minds, long before its actual accomplishment; but that crowning honour was most certainly reserved for one Ronalds, whose centenary passed without recognition in 1888; and, indeed, it was still more strange that, at the Jubilee Celebration of the Electric Telegraph—which took place the year before—no mention was made of Sir Francis Ronalds, as its inventor, so completely ignorant were the celebrants of the true state of the case!

Hammersmith can boast of being the birthplace of the electric telegraph, and of still possessing the former residences, by the water-side, of the original inventor,

Sir Francis Ronalds, and of Sir Charles Wheatstone, who borrowed, and in company with Sir William Fothergill Cooke, in 1837, perfected Ronalds' original ideas, which the latter had worked out in a thoroughly conclusive and practical manner as far back as 1816; a fact which disposes of the accuracy of the late quotation from these pages.

It was in the garden of his house at Hammersmith that Sir Francis, then, and for long afterwards, plain Mr. Ronalds, set up in that year a veritable electric telegraph line over eight miles in length, the wire passing backwards and forwards on a framework of timber, through which he flashed instantaneous messages by means of frictional electricity. Not content with overhead wires, which he thought liable to damage, he also constructed an underground line, cased in insulated glass-tubes and a casing of wood, portions of which were afterwards dug up, as the following interesting letter from Mr. J. A. Peacock relates, written in December, 1871:

"About five or six years ago I was in the garden—then rented by a friend of mine—wherein this telegraph was laid down, when it was dug for and found, after a lapse of upwards of forty years, what was then found and seen agreeing with the descriptions given in the book. Several yards of copper-wire were found where the ground had not been disturbed, by reason of a large rustic garden-seat and alcove having been over it; a glass-tube, or the greater part of one, with the copper-wire in it; and one of the joints with a short tube (glass) were also found; the copper-wire seemed to be in perfect order. The wooden trough and pitch had become consolidated with the earth, which was as hard as, and formed an opening like, that of a drain-tile, or the run of a burrowing animal."

These relics, together with the original dial-plates used at Hammersmith, passed into the possession of Mr. L. Clark, M.I.C.E., after being exhibited at Brighton.

This was unquestionably the first electric telegraph; and Wheatstone frankly admitted that he and his co-partner were indebted to that Hammersmith telegraph for all the subsequent improvements which so greatly increased the utility of Ronalds' great discovery.

In 1823, Sir Francis Ronalds published a book—referred to in Mr. Peacock's letter—containing illustrations and a full de-



scription of the Hammersmith telegraph of 1816, the year, by-the-bye, when guineas ceased to be coined, besides certain correspondence with Government officials responsible for the maintenance of the clumsy old semaphore telegraphs. It is needless to add that the inventor failed to convince the official mind that there was much in it; and the matter dropped in consequence.

Later on, while Mr. Ronalds was engaged as Director of Kew Observatory, and lived at Grosvenor House, Turnham Green, he erected another telegraph line in his garden there somewhat similar to the Hammersmith one. At first sight it seems curious that the neighbouring parishes of Hammersmith, Chiswick, and Brentford, should have been the homes of Ronalds, Cooke, and Wheatstone; but the fact of their close proximity explains much.

The three families were well acquainted, and the kindly inventor made no secret of his discoveries, of which Wheatstone and Cooke's father were well aware at the time, so that it is small matter for wonder that his young friends reaped the honours and profits of an invention for which the real Simon Pure only received the honour of knighthood in his eighty-third year! This neglect, however, troubled him but little, for he was the perfection of a disinterested enthusiast in the interests of his favourite science, and took no pains to protect his inventions with a view to pecuniary profit.

By the comparatively few his true worth and fame are known and properly appreciated; but to the million he remains an altogether unknown quantity, although it is very probable that without his early discovery the ungrateful world might yet be waiting for its telephones, electric-lamps, and sixpenny telegrams.

The question whether Cooke was a conscious or unconscious "adapter" of Ronalds' previous discoveries may, in the minds of the censorious, be a matter of doubt; but one thing is clear, at any rate, which is, that when inventors fall out, other men sometimes come by their own; and so it was with Ronalds. A fierce controversy arose between the twin inventors—Cooke and Wheatstone—which, at the time, quite eclipsed the modest fame of Ronalds; but certain statements becoming public, attention was drawn to his prior claims, and among electricians it became known that the disputants were quarrelling over what was not quite their own, although it is, of course, an indisputable fact that they

improved and introduced the electric telegraph to the world at large, just twenty-one years after its birth in the mind and at the hands of Ronalds.

For the benefit of those who may be desirous of searching more deeply into the matter, there may be recommended the following sources of information, namely: "A Description of an Electric Telegraph," by Francis Ronalds, 1823; "The Ronalds Catalogue of Electrical Works," edited by Mr. A. J. Frost, in 1880; and "Theleme," for February the first, 1889, in which chapter and verse will be found for all, and more than all, that has been advanced in this necessarily brief recognition of the just claims to honour of the great unknown.

## A MORAL SHIPWRECK.

### A COMPLETE STORY.

It was a hot June afternoon, and, in spite of open windows, the air inside the schoolroom of King Edward's Grammar School, at Martlebury, was very close and stuffy, an atmospheric condition which, coupled with the effects of early dinner and the drowsy cawing of rooks and humming of bees, which came in from the outside, made it no easy matter for Mr. Brownfield, who was taking afternoon school, to maintain that watchfulness necessary to keep forty or more boys close at their mathematics, and to see that they did not take to consuming apples, or kicking shins, or carving names on desks. Mr. Brownfield had the county paper before him, and he was trying, seemingly on homœopathic principles, to conquer his rising drowsiness by the consideration of its contents; but the mists rose more and more persistently before his eyes, and welcome sleep would soon have descended, had he not, just at the critical moment, been warned that something had happened, by the sudden cessation of all those muffled noises which accompany slackness of work. Mr. Brownfield opened his eyes and saw that the Doctor was in his high desk at the other end of the room. Not twice a term did the Doctor sit in his august seat during afternoon school; but here he was, and what was more, we were evidently about to know what had brought him there.

"I have just received the news," the Doctor said, "that Philip Magenias has been elected to an open scholarship at

Carfax College, Oxford. It is some time since so great an honour has fallen to the school, and I wish to be the first to congratulate the boy who has won it, and to ask you all to give him a hearty cheer."

The Doctor held out his hand, and a tall, dark boy, sitting at the end of the nearest bench, rose and took it. Then we all cheered, in the rough and tumble manner so characteristic of the English boy; and the Doctor crowned our happiness by giving us a half-holiday on the spot.

Philip Magenis was a black swan amongst the lads of exceeding homely wit who were at that time King Edward's alumni at Martlebury. He was the son of a Jamaica planter, and, except for a short visit, paid twice a year to his father's Liverpool agent, he remained all his time at Martlebury. Before he had been a week at the school, the Doctor saw that he had drawn a prize in the great boy lottery. Magenis simply walked to the head of the school, and the Doctor, put on his mettle, worked harder to bring on his brilliant pupil than he had worked since he had won his fellowship; and, at the first opportunity, he sent Magenis in for a scholarship at his old college.

There was a close schoolboy friendship between Magenis and myself, and the next half-year I found the school life very dreary without him. My parents, fired by the report of Philip's success, and by a flattering but fallacious belief in my own powers, sent me in at the next examination at Carfax to pick up a scholarship, as my brilliant schoolfellow had done; but all I gained was permission to enrol my name amongst the commoners of that august society.

In my first term—with all a freshman's humility upon me—I was, in a manner, awed by the brilliant figure Magenis was already making. It is not always that one can designate, amongst the undergraduate world, any particular youth of whom it may be confidently declared that he will make his mark in after life. It is never difficult to find men who become Hertford and Ireland scholars, almost as a matter of course; men who seem to have come into the world for the express purpose of achieving such distinctions, with a fellowship to follow, and then, also as a matter of course, dropping out of notice; but he who, not being either in the boat or the eleven, can compel the admiration of undergraduates as well as tutors, is a wonderful product, and is compounded of very different metal.

Such a one was Philip Magenis. The assured position which Magenis had attained when I went up, and the fact that he could pick and choose where he would for his associates, in no way shed that cold cloud of estrangement, which so often rises in like circumstances, over our friendship. We became, if anything, more intimate than ever, and, little prone as youth as a rule is to be impressed by intellectual power, I became a fervent believer in his superiority to all the rest of his contemporaries; and it was no wonder to me that he attained to all those distinctions which at present make up the footnote to his name in the Oxford Calendar. All who knew him soon followed my lead; and it became a commonplace, at least at Oxford, that any one, gifted with such brilliant parts, such charm of manner, and such indomitable will might compass any end he sought.

When I went down Magenis was already fellow and lecturer at St. Anne's, and there were rumours that he was busy over an edition of Aristophanes which would show that all the honours of scholarship were not to be swept away by Cambridge and the Germans. Great things were expected from his teaching; and the St. Anne's people, who had not shone particularly in the schools of late, began to talk about half-a-dozen firsts who were coming on. I never missed the University news in my morning paper; and what I read showed me that Magenis was rapidly coming to the front. Though my Greek was getting very rusty, I asked my bookseller whether the new edition of Aristophanes was announced, and began to search the columns of the literary journals for notices of the same.

One Saturday afternoon at Marlow I came across a man named Fletcher, whom I had often met in Magenis's rooms, and our talk naturally soon drifted towards the subject of our common friend, the coming man. As soon as I mentioned Magenis's name, Fletcher looked at me in interrogative surprise for a moment, and then said that he supposed I had not heard any Oxford news lately.

I replied that I had not, and thereupon Fletcher proceeded to give me some which astonished me considerably. Magenis, it seemed, had resigned his lectureship at St. Anne's at the end of last term, and had given up his rooms and left Oxford. Nobody knew what to make of it. The people at St. Anne's were very reticent;

and all the reports which had got about as to the cause of this sudden move on Magenis's part rested on conjecture alone. Some said he was disappointed with the fruit of his work as a teacher. Some that he wanted rest and leisure to finish off the *Aristophanes*, while others opined that a story of some sort would be heard about the business before long.

I was amazed beyond measure at this news, and I set to work to find out more details than Fletcher had been able to give me, but I got on very little farther. The real cause was never known outside the governing body of St. Anne's. Whatever it might be, it could not have involved anything greatly to Magenis's discredit, as he still held his fellowship; and, during the next Long Vacation, he was working for some time in the College library. He disappeared, however, before Term began, and Oxford seemed to get on quite well without him, and readily gave him that meed of oblivion which is so surely the portion of all those who do not keep their names before the world academic by means akin to those by which the sale of divers articles of everyday use is stimulated. The new *Aristophanes* was not announced in the publishers' lists, and still the world of scholarship went on much as usual. When a prominent soldier falls in the battle of life, it is wonderful how quickly the ranks close, and the struggle rages just the same as if he had never struck a blow, and so it was with Philip Magenis.

It was two years later when I next heard news of him, and this news was, that he had taken orders, and had gone to a small college living in Gloucestershire. One summer, during a boating trip over the western rivers and canals, I found myself close to Lymney Crucis, the cure of souls which Magenis had undertaken, so I halted early in the afternoon at a neighbouring village, and walked over to see him.

Magenis was at home; and, in spite of a shadow of reserve in his first words of greeting, it was clear that he was really glad to see me. His village was as lovely to look upon as the eye of an artist could wish; a perfect little church; cottages with warm, brown limestone roofs peeping out of the masses of elm and chestnut foliage; and his rectory was a cosy square house of the last century, as good æsthetically, perhaps, as any of the neo-gothic dwellings with which the Anglican revival has covered the face of the land, but like all bachelors' houses, it was cold and un-

lovely. A few pictures, which I remembered in the old college days, hung upon the walls of the room, which served him for library and dining-room as well; and the shelves were filled with books, many of them richly-bound college prizes. The furniture was rough and homely, and there were evidences on all sides that the place was the home of a man who shifted largely for himself.

We drew our chairs to the fire, which Magenis had kindled, as the evening was chilly, and, as the light flickered round the dusky room and showed me the graceful etchings and dainty books side by side, with Church almanacks and hours of choir practice, and coal and blanket-club accounts and other homely memoranda of a country parson's life, I recalled to mind their late environment, and realised, in a way, the depth and breadth of the gulf which Magenis must have traversed in passing from his old to his new life. He talked freely enough; but I fear I was an inattentive listener, for my thoughts would keep wandering away into speculations as to what cross-current of the pitiless, uncontrollable stream of circumstance, could have landed this man on the shore of such an intellectual wilderness as Lymney Crucis.

Magenis was still on the right side of thirty; but his was one of those restless spirits which agonise over trifles, and, in consequence, his face was already drawn and lined, and his hair was grizzling fast. In his talk there was just the same charm and brightness as of old. Insight, and grasp, and power were all there; but I very soon found out from the drift of his discourse, that he had made a clean cut with the past; that Carfax, and St. Anne's, and the new edition of *Aristophanes*, were forbidden ground. He was very much interested in my own affairs, and he asked me all sorts of questions as to what I was doing, and what I was going to do; and when I, in return, wanted to know something about his parish work, he was no longer reticent. He had plenty to say, both about its more serious side, and about the cricket club, and the cottage flower-show, and the athletic sports, and the other diversions over which the country parson of to-day is supposed to preside, in order to keep his parishioners from ennui and the public-house.

I was glad to note a ring of enthusiasm in his voice as he spoke of the change for the better which had come over the parish

lads since he had shown them that his duties as a clergyman did not begin and end with the church door. I marked, too, that he had even picked up a slight twang of Gloucestershire accent, as he went on describing his present way of life, as if it were the one field of work he would have chosen from all the rest. There seemed to be no backward gazing towards that fair city which lay not many miles away; no hankering after the career within its walls which, for a man of his bent, must have been almost an ideal one; and, as I looked at his strenuous face, I began to wonder whether, after all, he had made a mistake in leaving Oxford. It was about eight o'clock when a ring came at the bell, and our tête-à-tête was interrupted by the entry of a clerical neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Morris. It was plain, from the way in which he and Magenis met, that the two men saw a good deal of each other. I was a little annoyed to find that our pleasant talk of past times was cut short at once in favour of a dialogue between the host and the newcomer on what might by courtesy have been called rural economy; but which had a tendency to specialise itself into an eclogue, the theme of which was the breeding and management of the pig. Mr. Morris was a short, stout, dark man, with crisply curling black hair, and a brick-red complexion. His clothes looked as if they had never yet been brushed; and they retained, along with a twelvemonth's dust, an odour of rank cavendish, which a two miles walk in the air had not dissipated.

"So you've sold your Berkshires, Morris," said Magenis, as soon as the newcomer had lighted his pipe. "I saw them on Harry Joyce's cart the other day."

"Yes, I've sold them," said Morris, with a grin of enjoyment overspreading his oily countenance, "and I fancy I've sold Master Harry, too. He'd had a glass too much when he came to look at 'em; and I'd make a bet he'll lose ten shillings apiece over 'em."

"You'll have the Income Tax people down upon you for farming profits, Morris."

"Oh, I don't do so badly, what with one thing or another." And then, for the next half-hour, Mr. Morris went on detailing to us the sum he had netted from the year's produce of an extraordinary sow; how much an acre he had got for his potatoes, and what he meant to do next year with a patch of lucerne. To my amazement

Magenis listened to it all with a show of interest. "And next spring," Mr. Morris went on, "I'll see to that bit of yours at the top of the garden, and get it cleaned. Then, if you give it a good dose of muck every winter, it will last you for twenty years."

"Twenty years," I groaned, inwardly, as I listened to this droning boor. Twenty years of such a life for a man like Magenis, after breathing for a season the keenest intellectual air that England holds! I almost expected to see him writhe and shiver as he listened; but he gave no such sign, and Morris went on in the same strain till past ten, when, to my joy, he took his departure, after first imbibing a glass of grog mixed strong enough to ward off any amount of evening damp he might encounter on his way home.

After he was gone, we sat chatting till past midnight; and the next morning my host walked with me as far as the canal wharf, where I had left my boat.

"Now, Phil," I said, at parting, "I'm not going without a promise from you that you will run up to town for a week, before Christmas."

"I see what notion you've got in your head," he replied, with a little ring of sarcasm in his voice. "You think I'm 'rusting up,' as the saying is, in these wilds, and you kindly propose to arrest further deterioration."

"My dear fellow, I want you to come for my own pleasure, much more than for any possible benefit to yourself; and Hammond, and Barton, and Wingrove, are always talking about you."

"You don't say so; now just tell me, do these illustrious wits ever show any signs of rust? I know it's presumption to suggest that men can get rusty in London; but I'm a little curious."

"I'll have them all to meet you at the Club, and then you shall judge for yourself."

"I recognise Barton's hand, now and then, in the 'Grove,' which I see about once a month. Whether the rust has got at his wits or not, I won't venture to say; but it has certainly not corrupted that fine store of commonplace he collected at Oxford. Barton is one of the luckiest men I know. He has found something as good as the philosopher's stone. Aided and abetted by certain wise publishers and a discerning public, he turns his rubbish into gold, or cheques, which are just as good."



"Ah, now you are a little unfair, Magenis. To hear you talk like that, shows plainly that a spell in town is the very thing you want. It's all very well to do the Timon in moderation; but men can't get along without society of some sort."

"My good fellow, haven't I got Morris, and another just like him in the next parish? The fact is—I don't mind confessing it a bit—that I have got into my rut; one which does for me well enough, and I don't much care to meet Barton, or Johnson, or Thomson, and hear how these superfine gentry are grinding along in theirs. I study the world's history in a penny paper two days old, and I don't find I'm much the worse for it."

"Perhaps not," I replied; "but aren't you a little hard upon your old friends, who want to see you, and talk to you again, quite independent of rust, and ruts, and all the rest of it?"

"My old friends. Yes. I often think no man ever had better friends than I have had; friends who were good for foul weather as well as fair," he said, in a tone which almost persuaded me that I was listening to the Magenis of five years ago; "but our ways have parted, and we had better each go on our own road. You don't understand, I can see, how it is that I can endure poor Morris's chatter about his pigs and his potatoes; but have you ever asked yourself why you should turn up your nose at a man who finds consolation in his pigs and his potatoes?"

"I'd never turn up my nose at a peasant, in such case, Magenis."

"Yes, but why draw the line at the peasant? Why should Morris and I be cut out? By rightly administering our pigs and our potatoes, we add to the earth's produce, and find occupation, and do harm to no man. How many of your persons of culture can say as much for their daily round? Good-bye. Send me a line whenever you can spare the time; and take care of yourself amongst the wits of the 'Cam and Isis.'"

So we parted. This last speech, the bitter laugh that accompanied it, and the weary look on his face, and his listless gait as he turned and vanished from my sight, gave fresh life to my fears that Magenis, in spite of his professions of content, was eating his heart out in this solitude. I thought about him, and little else, as I made my way back to town. There I had to resume my own fight with

the world, so Philip Magenis and his fortunes grew as dim in my recollection as, no doubt, I and mine did in his.

For many months no tidings of Magenis came to me, and whenever I thought of him I tried to hope that my latest impression of him was a false one, and that he was indeed settled in a manner profitable both to himself and those about him; but I never ceased to regret that such a man should have sunk into so deep a slough. One evening as I entered the restaurant I frequented, I was astonished to see Magenis, in lay attire, seated at one of the corner tables. His eye caught mine at once, and the look of recognition was by no means cordial or effusive. It was, indeed, sufficiently the opposite to show me, amazed as I was at the moment, that he would be better pleased if I were to pass on, and made no further sign; but the force of association, and the charm of the man's personality, were too strong, and I held out my hand to him. He took it, but with a very stiff arm, and his whole manner showed me that he meant to be left to himself. I was not inclined to force my company upon him; so, after a few commonplace words, I withdrew to my accustomed table at the other end of the room.

I had not been long seated before Stewart Netherby, a man who often dined alongside me, entered the restaurant, and, as he came towards me, I noticed that he nodded familiarly to Magenis. Here, then, was a clue to this latest phase of the Magenis mystery; and, as soon as Netherby had ordered his roast mutton and greens, I opened the subject.

"Oh, so you know something of Magenis, do you?" he replied. "I forgot, though, you and he would be about the same standing at Oxford. Poor Magenis, he has made a sad muddle of it, first and last."

"You don't mean to say that he has given up his living," I cried.

"But that's just what he has done. He has cut the whole concern, this time; and he isn't like so many of those fellows who, when they cease to believe in one form of religion, must needs invent a new one. He has done with the Church, and means to make the best terms he can with the world, I take it."

"But has he been in London long? I never see anything of him at the 'Cam and Isis.'"

"It's nearly a year since I first met him

at the 'Organon.' He has taken his name off your Club, I fancy, and sees very little of his old friends. His mind seems to be full of the crisis yet, for whenever we talk together, he always harks back to his spiritual difficulties."

"He is the very last man I should have expected to find in such trouble," I replied. "When I saw him down in Gloucestershire, he seemed quite happy in his work. I confess I was a little surprised that life in such a place should content him; but so it was."

"Ah, yes, he liked it for a bit; but one must never be surprised at any queer turn men like Mageniz may take. You remember he vanished from Oxford just as every one was looking for that new book which was to take the world by storm; and no one knew why. Now he has cut the Church to become a book-seller's hack, and no one knows why; though, the other day Tom Evans did tell me that he was supposed to be a little too fond of whisky for a parish priest in these blue-ribbon days; but what can the Bishops expect if they send men like Mageniz to vegetate amongst a lot of yokels? However, it won't do to take everything that Tom relates for gospel; and I have never seen Mageniz drink anything stronger than water since I have known him."

"And what is he doing for a living?" I asked.

"I heard he was editing school classics, and doing 'hack' work for the 'Grove.'"

"Heavens, what a waste!"

"Ah, it is, and no mistake; but this is a queer world, and many men, just as clever as Mageniz, get beaten by it. 'Tis enough to make one wonder sometimes whether this universe can be run on right principles."

After this lapse into moralising, my companion reverted to the practical, and enlightened me as to the rights and wrongs of a dispute which was, at that time, running very high in journalistic circles; but all his explanations left me just as wise as they found me. Mageniz had finished his meal, but still sat in his place reading, and the sight of his clouded, weary face would let me think of nothing else besides the cruel coil of fate which had caught him in its folds and dragged him down into the abyss, away from the path up to the heights which he might so easily have scaled. We no longer give to Fate the resistless, relentless attributes which are cast about her in the drama of the Greeks;

but here seemed to be a man, pursued like *Edipus* or *Orestes* by some invisible malignant power. In such case, nowadays, we look for some flaw in the moral fibre, and hold that every man carries about with him a fate shut up in some corner of his anatomy which will make or mar him according to the use he makes of his gifts. There are signs, indeed, that science will soon bring it all to a question of physical temper. If the tabernacle enclosing the life of a particular person be duly trained and nourished according to its idiosyncrasy, the tabernacle and the life together may rise to the Zenith; vary the treatment ever so little, and they sink to Nadir. It was hard for me to think in this fashion of a figure so picturesque as Mageniz, and I would fain have found the source of his troubles in the dread grandeur of the Greek idea. The Philistine moralist would settle the question out of hand by declaring that there must be a faulty strand, a screw loose somewhere; but in my weakness I could not help laying much of the mischief to the charge of malignant circumstance, that watchful foe who waits to trip us up whenever it comes to choosing between the right hand and the left; and to whose working, much more than to the natural evil of man's heart, we may ascribe the genesis of those evils which fill life with nine-tenths of its terrors.

## POETRY AND SPECULATION.

WE live in an atmosphere of paradox. Else I should not venture to affirm, as I do, that the man who spends his days bawling on the Stock Exchange, and the tranquil poet in his little cot by the banks of a rill, have much in common with one another. And when I say this, I do not refer merely to the affinity that every man has with his neighbour, inasmuch as they are man and man, with the same appetites for sleep, and food, and motion. I mean that, under a certain twist of circumstances, the poet might do well for the Stock Exchange, and the man who lives by "rises and falls" might write very pretty verses.

Both of them are, by the method of their lives, rooted and grounded in the imagination.

We all know that the poet is nourished on the breath of his fancy. Condemn him to go to and fro in the world unsupported by the divine crutches of the ideal, and

what a sorry career his would be! This is made sadly evident by the confession of individual members of the fraternity in those moments of indescribable anguish, when their genius seems to have forsaken them, and they are left, as they fear, for ever, face to face with the naked skeleton of things: "There is not," says poor honest Burns, "among all the martyr-ologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is, not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear." Sensibility and imagination! Of such, and little else, are they compounded. And so, when, either as atonement for their sins, or to teach them to be strong in weakness, their imagination suddenly glides out of their nature, and they are left trembling before a grim and somewhat unkind world, no wonder their sufferings are often unbearable.

His pleasures are, however, like his pains—exquisite. When the tide of life flows strong within him, when imagination tickles sensibility, and sensibility spurs on imagination, there is then no bounds to the ecstasy of the man. It is reaction upon reaction. The pendulum swings as far one way as it formerly swung the other way. The burden of his lay is now "hope," whereas, of late, it was "despair." He is all or nothing. He cannot bridle or coerce his fancy to make it belie his feelings. That is a gift of the prose writer, in compensation for the inferior order of his talent. Or, at least, it is the mark of such strength of mind as seldom indeed is one of the endowments of poets of the first rank.

No wonder that poets who have sworn undivided allegiance to sensibility are short-lived. It is only the philosophic bards who come to threescore years and ten; having taught themselves to beware the fires of inspiration which consume their more impressionable brethren, long ere the first snows of autumn float down upon their heads. These are they who

On man, on nature, and on human life,  
Musing in solitude . . . oft perceive  
Fair train of imagery before them rise,  
Accompanied by feelings of delight,  
Pure, or with no unpleasant sadness mixed.

Their very pains serve them to point a melodious moral; and they die as they have lived—didactically.

But to return to my parallel. Is not the speculator upon the Stock Exchange in

much the same case as the poet of sensibility? His pleasures and pains are of the intense kind. Little, as a rule, knows he of the calm middle gratifications of life. He may seem, to be sure, like an ordinary mortal in the hours when his business is suspended. But look into his heart, and read the hurrying thoughts that alarm and cheer him in succession. He plays for high stakes, like the poet himself; and, when ruin stares him in the face, even as in the like case the poet gloomily and fiercely analyses his own woes, and proclaims his suffering to the world, so our speculator finds himself, in default of other consolation, compelled to

Hope till hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

If life is estimable, rather for the intensity of its pleasures than for the length to which it may be practised, who would not rather live the life of the speculator of ordinary vicissitudes, than in the dull, monotonous life of the person whose circumstances have held him aloof, all his days, from the palpitating shocks of hope and fear? The man who does not run the gamut of his faculties is a vegetable, not a man. I know well that it is reckoned seemly and philosophic to be indifferent.

Yet, unless such stoical indifference succeed to the strife of hopes and fears, which are the common lot of men, and be not a substitute for them, it is a defect and not a quality to be desired. There must first be life, experience, sensations—as Schiller says—and, afterwards, there may then be the art both of representing them in literature and of bringing experience and sensations into subservience to the methods of conduct most convenient to the individual. It is a mercy we cannot all be philosophers, even as it is, no doubt, well that we are not all fools.

The speculator, devoid of imagination, is as impossible a being as the poet without fancy. The one, in buying scrip of a new gold mine at par already with his mind's eye, sees the day when that for which he pays a hundred pounds will be worth a thousand pounds. The day may never come. It is a pity, but our friend has meanwhile lived in a paradise of hope of his own furnishing; and it is at least probable that he is allowed to eat some of the fruit of this fair garden of his dreams.

Similarly, the poet, when he has surrendered himself wholly to the sway of his conception, is, for the time, less a material being, gross like you or me, than

pure spirit careering through ether. On this subject, I quote her Grace the Duchess of Newcastle of ancient renown, not for her poetic genius, but for her quaint confirmation of my words :

When I did write this book, I took great paines,  
For I did walk, and thinke, and breake my braines;  
My thoughts run out of breath, then down would  
lye,  
And panting with short wind like those that dye.

Her Grace's pains were coincident with the merit of her achievements. Had she been better poet, she would have suffered less in the embrace of her thought, and more afterwards in the realisation that she was woman as well as poet. The bard of a generation is transported far out of himself by the sweet obligations of his verse. None but he knows of the happiness that attends upon this suspension of actual existence and transference, like the soul of Epimenides, into other spheres.

What, then, of the awakening, or, rather, the relapse from the ideal towards the real? It is not agreeable. There is often prostration of body as well as disappointment of spirit. When the bard is poor, a husband, and a father, and in the position of brand-winner to his wife and little ones, this reaction may well be diabolical. He has revelled in a world other than this. He must pay in the body for the soul's debauch, and bitter, indeed, may the reckoning be. Nevertheless, under average circumstances, has he so very much to complain of?

Man cannot live by pleasure alone. The recall to material life is salutary; and when the worst is said, has he not, during this one day or hour, experienced such delicate and yet intense joys as, even in mere recollection, ought, in reason, more than counterbalance a whole year of drudgery and deprivation!

It would seem so, notwithstanding the clamorous denials of but too many of those who have interpreted their sufferings in song.

I have been in the company of men who are speculators by profession, and I have been in the company of poets. The former show much of the abstraction of mind of the latter. Unless you talk with them about the one engrossing subject, they reply to you much at hazard, and not infrequently with a distant look, almost of commiseration, as if you were a denizen of a world far less interesting than theirs. The poet's self-absorption, at times, is, of course, proverbial. He cannot always help

himself. A flood of fancy overwhelms him, and, for the nonce, he is but a being of ideas, held together by a fleshly form in human guise.

Perhaps it is a pity that the poet and the speculator cannot now and again withdraw themselves from the arena of the world. During the intervals of the poet's inspirations, he is often an unhappy man; restless, worn, and distrustful of himself and his fellow creatures. The speculator, too, who has cast the dice, and knows he cannot learn the issue of the fling for weeks, perhaps months, must, in the nature of things, suffer much anxiety which he would be glad to spare himself. If only they could both have their periods of insensible coma, it might be an advantage. For the mind, in their case, has a way of preying upon itself when it has not what it conceives to be the exact cause for exultation. If it cannot rejoice, it is prone to grieve.

To some people the speculator is, by the nature of his profession, a bane to his fellow men. He neither sows nor spins like other men. He is nothing better than a gambler—a person who would, for his own profit, play pitch-and-toss with the moon and stars if he were permitted—a person in whom it were as vain to seek for reputable qualities of mind as to exact intelligence of a born idiot.

This inference is not wholly an unreasonable one. But in so far as mere tangible products are concerned, the poet is in precisely the same case. Plato and Adam Smith would rate him very low as a promoter of the material well-being of other men, even if they would not rather exile him as a cause of positive harm. Both in the world of trade and politics, the imagination, unaided, is treated with but scant courtesy. You are all very well in your own province, my friend; but here you are quite impotent, and likely to be an insufferable embarrassment.

Yet there is something heroic about the speculator which compels a certain respect for him, even though one may not be in sympathy with his method of livelihood. He, a pigmy, is for ever tilting with Fortune herself, who is said to hold all the threads of life—of men and all living beings—in her hands. Ours is a world replete with mystery, as it is teeming with life. None can say with any assurance what will happen to-morrow. There may, in fact, be no to-morrow for us. At any moment, it is said, one or other of the



myriad whirling fragments of which the universe consists might deviate from its course, and break our world to atoms. There would be a prodigious dust somewhere for a while; but, afterwards, all would be as it was before, save and except ourselves.

And in the face of this gigantic menace, which one might suppose would suffice to hold us all fast in servile subordination to Fate and the issue of things, man snaps his fingers at the future, and says, "This will happen," or "That will happen," and stakes money upon his arguments!

Dame Fortune herself, president of all things, must be hugely entertained by our conduct; and it is quite possible that she finds so much diversion in the behaviour of our friend the speculator, that she favours him because of his temerity, even as the world is disposed to smile amiably at a precocious child, pat him on the head, and give him a shilling or two as a mark of its appreciation of his wit or impudence.

Nor need the speculator, any more than the poet himself, be ignoble in private life, because he is so much at the mercy of his imagination. He is such a man as he is quite independently of the exercise of this particular faculty of his. The speculator will not become an avaricious man, simply because his imagination dazzles him with the project of untold wealth as the result of this or that "operation" on the Stock Exchange or in the markets. The poet will not put an end to himself merely because, at his awakening from a dream of fancy, he finds life is harder than it seemed when viewed through the radiant medium of his luxuriant imagination.

Of the perils that dog both these professions, we have already said something. It is difficult to determine in which profession they excel. They may not be perils wholly incident to the man as speculator or poet; but the manner of his life is nearly sure to augment them. Seduced by his imagination, the speculator, whom Dame Fortune thinks well to rebuff, does not, therefore, give up the battle, or even allow himself a truce. No; he must, he thinks, be bold. Courage is so estimable a virtue that it must meet with its reward. And so, to account for a loss of five thousand pounds, he recklessly incurs new liabilities which may, or may not, cancel this loss, may, or may not, double it. When the imagination thus takes the bit in its teeth, it is apt to go at a terrible pace. And in more instances

than the world wots of, it brings its master crashing to the ground, a ruined and infuriated man.

There are times to indulge the imagination, and times to slight it, and there is no arbiter as to the respective fitness of these occasions, except that ancient, discreet judge, Reason.

The poet who places the reins of his imagination in the hands of this judge at the beginning of his career, is likely to be the happiest kind of poet. He may well, on this condition, be content to surrender a measure of his prospective greatness. And, certainly, the speculator may be advised to forego one half or a quarter of the profits that his imagination promises him, if only he also may get countenance from Reason for the residue.

## KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*," "*A Faive Damzell*," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XLV. A VISITOR.

MAY-DAY has had so many lovers, so many fond poets and gentle female hearts dedicated to it, that it is not for the common pen to add to the already unnumbered words of praise, especially, as truth—which is greater than fiction—being told, May-day has, for some time past, woefully misbehaved itself. Once, she was a lovely maiden, clad with summer draperies, dancing the livelong day, and quite impervious to catching cold from wet feet, for she had an especial liking to green grass, or, rather, velvet sward; and she carried wreathed flowers and had nothing to do except to be on the look out for some "rustic swain," who, regardless of losing a day's wage, could also trip it with her and the other maidens of the May; and further, was wondrously gifted with the power of improvising verses.

We still cling to the old falsehoods with passionate perseverance, hoping against hope that good old times will come back; forgetting, that when they do—or, if they do—our taste for syllabub will be gone, and that a day's wage will seem better than a dance round a Maypole. Anyhow, when they come, we shall then all be able to read: the poor, what is written in books, and the rich, what a too-highly civilised society has written in their minds. Alas! there are no more May-days in store for us.

Jesse Vicary, upon this May-day, could have remembered—had he so wished—days of happy rambles in green woods. He could remember, or, rather, he could have recalled—had he not tried and succeeded in banishing such ideas—great thoughts, which oftener come in spring days, like sap that travels to the embryo buds; but, for him, all this had been swept away. May-day was to be his starting-point; he had fixed the date, and there only remained for him to accomplish his revenge. Having turned over many impossible plans, he had settled on none of them; but he meant simply to go and meet Mr. Kestell face to face, and—tell him the truth.

He would go and stay at Rushbrook, in some poor cottage, and he would waylay him. He would force an interview upon him. Whose fault was it he was out of work and fast sinking down into hopelessness? Whose, but the man who should have been honest enough to own his fault, and not act a lie before the respectable world.

May-day, in London, was gloomy, and the sun, struggling out through misty clouds, produced a feeling of closeness, without warmth, which was oppressive to the spirits.

Symee had made the small quarters which the brother and sister could afford look something like home. Slowly but surely the girl was beginning to understand that there is something better than abundance of creature comforts. "Man shall not live by bread alone," has a depth of meaning which only a few of us realise. Symee, it is true, had worked hard enough for her daily bread; but she found that, anxious as it was to have to think of every penny, disappointing, too, as was Jesse's strange, moody attitude, the freedom she experienced compensated for all the creature comforts the Kestells had given her.

How hard she tried to get something to tempt Jesse, how she treasured up little amusing sayings of Obed Diggings's to win a smile from him, seldom with success; but all this had drawn her out of herself. She could not blame Jesse, because she was continually blaming herself for not having sooner come to him; and now she fancied this was her punishment. Trouble had quite altered her brother's character, and not knowing the reason, Symee thought: "It is my fault, and this is my punishment."

On this May-day though, Symee had a

longing for the sight of the country, a longing which country people alone can understand, and she had spent a half-penny on a bunch of wallflowers, which, when the breakfast-table was ready, she triumphantly placed in the centre.

"Jesse, look, don't you love wallflowers?"

Jesse Vicary looked at the flowers without appearing to see them.

"Ah," he said, pushing back the hair from his forehead. Then, suddenly: "Symee, do you mind being left alone a little while? I can't find work, and—before looking for any more I must go down to Rushbrook."

"To Rushbrook! Oh, mayn't I go too? Miss Amice will let me, I know."

"No," said Jesse, quickly, almost roughly. "Symee, you chose once for all. If you are tired of being with me, then go; but don't come back again."

The tears started in Symee's eyes. Could this be the tender brother she had once thought so gentle and patient?

"I will do as you think best, of course, Jesse dear; only as you were going——"

"Oh, I shall not be long. You can spend the evenings with Milly Diggings. When I come back I must find work, or else I had better take to street sweeping."

He laughed a little scornfully.

"When are you going, dear? I must get your new shirt ironed; and——"

"I'm going to-day. I don't want to be made smart, Symee." Then, ashamed of himself as he saw the tears fall slowly down Symee's cheeks, he added:

"When I come back we'll talk over plans, Symee, and you shall decide about the future."

Symee positively dared not ask any more questions, and wisely she set about getting Jesse's handbag ready. Before Symee's arrival he had never had a woman's care and forethought. It seemed hard that now it had come to brighten his lot he could not enjoy it.

Every other feeling was burnt up. He even did not recognise himself. The old Jesse with his wealth of love and poetic fancies was gone—gone!

It did not take long to prepare Jesse's handbag, and then to put a few of his papers under lock and key. Everything was ready, and he stopped on the threshold as Symee timidly brushed his rather threadbare coat.

"You must look spruce, dear Jesse, or

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they—people will think I don't take care of you. Shall you go to the farm?"

"No, to some cottage, or to the little inn."

"Oh, Jesse, you won't be very comfortable there. Why must you go? Stop here till—we could go together."

Stop here. Jesse listened to the words, and they sounded to him like the far-off voice of a guardian angel. But another voice far nearer said:

"No, let me get it over now, at once; let him own his sins, and feel some of the misery he would have me feel."

"Good-bye, Symee; take great care of yourself till I come back." And, without waiting for further leave-taking, Jesse was gone, hurrying forward as if he were being followed by a host of enemies who wished him harm; and yet, in truth, the only thing which frightened him were Symee's gentle words, "Stop here."

When Jesse was gone, Symee sat down and cried as if her heart would break. Life was so very, very sad; the brightest dreams had been realised only in mockery. Poverty stared her in the face, for her last gold piece had been slipped, unbeknown to Jesse, into his purse, and he was so absent, she hoped he would not find out her deception.

The future was a miserable outlook; even poverty was not so bad as Jesse's altered character. Nothing she did pleased him. There was some terrible thought in his mind, she knew not what, but it brought him nothing but misery.

"But it was my fault, I rejected him when he was so anxious for me, so lonely. This is my punishment. How can I blame him?"

The day seemed long indeed. She was too miserable to go out, or even to go and sit in her room below; she was making Jesse some new shirts, and at these she stitched away as if she could stitch her penitence into them.

It was in this occupation that she was surprised by a visitor. The knock at the door made her jump as she said "Come in;" and then her face flushed all over as she saw Mr. Hoel Fenner enter. She felt so terribly ashamed of being found in such a poor room, so ashamed that such a fine gentleman as Mr. Fenner should see the altered circumstances of Jesse, for she knew how much her brother had prized Mr. Fenner's friendly kindness.

But after the first instant of deep shame, Hoel Fenner's manner surprised her so

much, that she happily forgot a little of her humiliation. In the first place, the man she remembered as the embodiment of refinement and health looked terribly ill. He was a shadow of his former self, and his clothes hung loosely on him as if they belonged to some one else. Secondly, Mr. Fenner seemed hardly to notice the poverty around him, and to be only eager to see her, as he at once accepted the chair she offered him.

"Thank you; I am tired. It is nice to rest. I have been ill, and I hardly realised what a poor creature I was, Miss Vicary. I have had rather a hunt for you; I went to your brother's old lodgings, and there was not even 'Liza' there. Everything has changed. Happily, the neighbours at last instructed me. Tell me, when will Vicary come in? I can wait. I must see him. I have only just come to town, and people seem to think I have come out of the grave. My lodgings are buried in papers and letters that have been waiting months for me."

He did not tell Symee that one letter he had not dared to read, and he had put it away unopened.

Hoel noticed Symee's blushes and her bewildered expression, and, with the true instinct of a gentleman, he courteously gave her time to recover herself. Only now did he notice, especially, the change in the lodgings and the poor surroundings of the place.

"It is very good of you, sir, to come here," began poor Symee, not yet feeling enough at ease to speak naturally. "I am very sorry, but Jesse is not in London. He will be sorry to miss you; he went away only this morning."

"Went away! Where to?"

"To Rushbrook."

"Has he got leave of absence?"

"Oh! you don't know, sir?" said Symee, finding courage. "Everything is altered. We shall never be happy again. Jesse lost his situation, and oh! the weary work he has had looking for more employment. He can't find any. It is dreadful to live in this big town and have no friends."

Symee positively could not help herself; she began to cry.

Hoel slowly took in the situation. A cold feeling of dread and self-reproach crept over him.

"It was my fault. I left him to that," he thought. Aloud, he said:

"Jesse Vicary without work? It is ridiculous! You don't understand, per-

haps, Miss Vicary; but your brother has real ability. He is fitted for better things than office work; besides—besides——”

“I shouldn’t mind what work it was, so that he could get something,” half-sobbed Symee, the long-kept-in sorrow forcing itself to the surface. “I believe doing nothing is sending him mad. He is quite altered—quite changed. I don’t believe even to you he would appear the same man. It’s trouble that is sending him off his head.”

“Vicary altered—I—saw something of the change you mean before I left. I was in trouble myself then, or else——”

The truth which Symee could not understand burst upon Hoel. Conscience said: “That is your work; you could have prevented this.” What, was Sister Marie right after all? Was it impossible to right a wrong by another deception?

“Has Jesse gone to Rushbrook? I must go after him. I am going there myself. Miss Vicary, please do not distress yourself,” added Hoel, so tenderly, that Symee thought she could now understand the charm of manner that had attracted Jesse. But she was wrong; his tenderness was a new feeling, born of new thoughts.

“You don’t know how terrible it is to see Jesse changed,” said Symee. Now that the ice was broken, she could continue. “He does not even care about my having come here to live with him. Miss Amice brought me; she is so good, even if she isn’t quite like other people. She tried to make me see my duty before, but I couldn’t; and then Jesse refused that farm in Canada, and, somehow, he blames Mr. Kestell. It is so wrong-headed of him. Mr. Kestell has always been a good friend to us, but Jesse won’t hear reason. He is mad, I think; mad with troubles which he has half brought upon himself.”

Hoel was speechless before this revelation. He had never imagined Jesse would leave Card and Lilley, and had said to himself:

“He is well off. Why disturb him at the expense of Elva’s father?”

“Why did you say he left his work?”

“They sent him away. Business is very bad just now; and it was a misfortune that couldn’t be helped. But Jesse will think that Mr. Kestell got him turned away. Oh, sir, how is it possible? Mr. Kestell got him the situation, and specially wanted him to remain there. Of course that Canada farm was a special offer—just

a chance. But it’s no use thinking of the past. I suppose in the future we shall have the workhouse to go to, for Jesse will never touch a penny of money that comes from Rushbrook. Oh, Mr. Fenner, I know Mr. Kestell well. If I were even to write a line to him and say we were in want, he would send me anything I liked to name. He is the most generous man on earth. Don’t you think it is hard on me to know that, and yet to have Jesse almost cursing me if I suggest it? And this place, too, it’s not fit for Jesse to live in, he who is only really happy in the country.”

Hoel was almost stupefied by the picture which Symee drew so graphically, because so simply. Yes, it was hard on her, but not so hard as if she knew the whole truth. Ignorance is more often bliss than we choose to believe.

Hoel got up and held out his hand, but he was recalled to the fact of his silence by seeing the look of surprise on poor Symee’s face.

“I will try and send you back your brother,” he said. “I am going to Rushbrook at once—to-day, if I can. You know, Miss Vicary, that there have been many sorrows connected with Rushbrook, even for me.”

He now no longer felt as if he were the only sufferer.

“Yes. And oh, sir, have you heard any particulars? Jesse won’t let me write to Rushbrook, but I saw it in the paper that Miss Elva was going to marry Mr. Akister. I can’t believe it.”

“Why not?”

“Oh, because she took on so——”

Symee stopped suddenly; she remembered the strong words that had been spoken by the servants about Mr. Fenner’s sudden disappearance.

“When I left?” faltered Hoel, quite humbly.

“Yes, sir; but, of course, you and she had your reasons. Miss Elva was very proud, she never uttered a word; but I saw how it altered her. She changed, too; and you should have seen how tender Mr. Kestell was to her.”

“I hope no one ever blamed her,” said Hoel, suddenly, and with curious energy, “she was blameless, entirely blameless; she is so now in marrying Mr. Akister. I was a coward, Miss Vicary, a—— Well, I shall go and see her married, and then that part of my life’s story will be ended.”